SPAWAR

SERMIS Graduates from the Megacenter

By Maria LoVasco Tolleson
SPAWAR Information Technology Center
New Orleans

The SERMIS redesign proposed as an alternative in an Economic Analysis conducted in 1996 is today a reality, with the result that a costly mainframe system now operates as a client/server environment with a new name.

SERMIS, or the Support Equipment Resources Management Information System, is the primary automated management information system that supports the Aircraft Maintenance Material Readiness List (AMMRL). The AMMRL Program is a set of policies and procedures which detail the kind and quantity of aviation maintenance support equipment that certain activities are required and authorized to have to accomplish their specific mission. SERMIS provided all levels of Support Equipment allowance, inventory and rework data to ensure the readiness of the fleet.

SERMIS was the sole automated source of in-use Naval Aviation Support Equipment asset information used by SE Managers when determining equipment allowances and excess/deficit structure. As well as supporting the AMMRL program, SERMIS also supported Navy and Marine Corp Support Equipment Logistics Managers.

The SERMIS project which was maintained and monitored by the SPAWAR ITC resided on the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) Megacenter in San Antonio. The DISA Megacenter served as the Data Processing Installation which controlled the UNISYS 2200 on which SERMIS resided.

Remaining on the UNISYS was one alternative, but maintaining the status quo meant maintaining and upgrading an expensive and outdated system. So in 1996 a study was undertaken to determine the feasibility of converting SERMIS to a client/server environment using the Oracle Relational Database.

Over the course of the 1 year study analyses were conducted to determine the economic implications associated with each alternative and to recommend the most technically and economically viable choice among them.

The findings revealed that the redesign, development and deployment of SERMIS would save the government over $11 million over the life of the system from reduced costs of day-to-day operations. In addition, more than $34 million in measurable benefits from improved asset management, system maintainability and accessibility and user productivity would add to these savings.

Furthermore, the redesign of SERMIS within a relational database environment and then migration to a state of the art client/server architecture would provide many future benefits in the way support equipment resources are managed throughout the Navy and Marine Corps.

According to Joan Sharp, Project Manager for the newly named SEMS (Support Equipment Management Systems) as the SERMIS is now called, "our clients stopped using the DISA mainframe on December 15 and that system went to query only. For two weeks during the actual conversion no updates were allowed. The new system, SEMS, was brought up on January 2nd."

The new system resides on Sun servers located at the New Orleans port facility. The long term plan is for both the servers and the support personnel to eventually move to the SPAWAR ITC location on the Lakefront.

"The clients should see increased functionality," Sharp said. "The major functional change in design is that serialized tracking is now in place."

Sharp marvels that an upfront estimate done more than 3 years ago resulted in a system that stayed within budget and within the timeline. "I find it remarkable that we developed a useable system within our estimate. And our customers are very happy with it."

For more information contact:
Maria LoVasco Tolleson, Public Affairs Officer, Information Technology Center, New Orleans, 504-697-5546

Updated Thursday, February 01, 2001